

How Should Wives Treat their Husbands?

[1 Peter 3:1-6](#)

1 Peter, Day 13

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

- 1 Peter 3:1-6, ESV

Okay, let's be honest for a minute: When you read 1 Peter 3:1-6, do you think, "Is Peter serious? Really?" Or do you think, "Is this really the Word of God?" Peter's words are so far removed from our culture's standards and expectations, they can be hard for us to really hear and process. So, what do we do?

I would suggest that we need a two-way cultural attitude adjustment before we can really hear and respond to Peter's words:

- First, we need to realize that Peter's words are framed by his own cultural context.
- Second, we need to be willing to question and challenge our own cultural context.

Yes, Peter's words are framed by his own culture, and that's a reality we need to grasp. Notice that chapter 3 begins with the word "likewise," tying this message to Peter's message to slaves, which begins in 2:18. When we read Peter's advice for slaves (or similar advice from Paul), we understand that we no longer live in a culture with slavery, and we know that Paul and Peter are not advocating for slavery. They're giving sound Gospel advice in a culture where slavery was a living reality for many of God's people. We need to see the principles and be able to apply them to ourselves, even though we are not slaves or masters. Their words still have sound wisdom for us to apply to how we do our work and how we treat others.

Likewise, the New Testament was written in a culture where women had very few rights. Women were practically sub-human in the ancient world. Paul and Peter are not advocating for such treatment of women, but they're giving solid Gospel application advice to women living in that culture. My wife is a very godly woman, and we've been happily married for 21 years. She has never called me, "Lord" or "Master," and if she ever did, it would clearly be as a joke.

Now, we also need to challenge our own culture's values. Our culture tells women that their only hope for a fulfilling life is to grasp and assert power, and they can do so through rugged individualism and through capitalizing on their sex appeal. In other words, even once we look past the cultural context to the true message of this passage, it is at odds with our culture, and we need to faithfully acknowledge that it is our culture that is defective and in error.

Peter is telling women to treat their husbands with respect and to cultivate their inner beauty. Peter tells women what he has already told all of us - that Christ-like humility and gentleness are more a more powerful force for godliness than self-assertion and bold rebellion. This is something our culture cannot understand and does not support, and our culture is wrong, in ways that hurt the very women our culture thinks it is protecting and promoting.

All of us need to realize the Christ-like formula that teaches us that we are strongest when we are meek, gentle, and dependent on Him. We are most powerful when we are most loving others like Jesus. This is the key to living for all Christians, including how wives should treat their husbands.